

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSHLAND ST. JAMES V.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wisbech

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121073

Headteacher: Ms. Jane Thain

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Thompson
25372

Dates of inspection: 4 – 8 February 2002

Inspection number: 230879

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Marshland St. James Wisbech Cambridgeshire
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Telephone number:	01945 430378
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. J Bantoft
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25372	Mike Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Science; Art and design; Design and technology; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9468	John Arscott	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11901	Pat Lowe	<i>Team inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage; Equal opportunities; English; Information and communication technology; Geography; History; Music; Religious education.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marshland St. James Primary School is a small Church of England Voluntary Controlled school some five miles to the east of Wisbech. The premises date from 1964, with a hall added in 1987 and further improvements made in 1996. There are 102 pupils on roll, taught in four classes. All pupils are of white, UK heritage. They are from a wide range of backgrounds, including one fifth who are from traveller families. The area is one of considerable social deprivation, an indicator of which is that over one third of pupils are entitled to free school meals. One third are identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs, which gives entitlement to extra help. Most pupils on the school's register of special educational needs have emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties, and one tenth of all pupils in the school have severe difficulties of this type. The proportion of pupils moving into or out of the local area each year is above average. For example, one third of the pupils in Year 6 were not at the school in Year 2.

Children are admitted to the Foundation Stage¹ year group at the start of the school year in which they are five, and are assessed shortly after admission. The results of the assessments show that attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year. Overall, it is well below average, with a small but significant number of pupils with very limited social skills and an almost complete lack of basic literacy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, the school is effective and provides satisfactory value for money. From a low starting point, its pupils achieve satisfactorily, but make slow progress in terms of their year-on-year progression through National Curriculum Levels. This is because many of them are identified as having learning difficulties, have great difficulty in remembering what they have been taught from day to day, and do not have regular opportunities to practise skills, such as reading, at home. The quality of teaching is good, but progress in some of the Foundation subjects² is inhibited because the curriculum needs to be improved. The school is well led and managed, and the staff team shows a clear commitment to improve standards further.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils are well taught.
- Relationships within the school are good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and make good progress in their personal development.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality help and make good progress.
- Pupils are well cared for.
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by her deputy and all staff.

¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three. Children complete the stage at the end of the Reception year.

² These are all subjects other than the core subject of English, mathematics and science.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Standards in science, art and design, design and technology (DT), and music, and the way in which the curriculum is planned in these subjects.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), and all aspects of the school's provision for it.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in 1998. Although standards in English, mathematics and science have not improved, inspectors are encouraged by the initiatives the recently appointed headteacher has designed to address these and other weaknesses. Action to improve attendance has already resulted in significant improvements, and the pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships have improved. The quality of teaching is better than it was, and procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils are more systematic. Pupils with special educational needs are now identified at an earlier stage and receive better quality help. Arrangements for developing pupils' moral and social awareness have improved. However, the school has not kept pace with the increased national requirements for ICT and, although the curriculum in the Foundation subjects is better, the school lacks a clear overview of the way in which pupils' skills are to develop in art and design, DT and music.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	E	E
Mathematics	E	D	E	D
Science	D	D	D	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The information shows, for example, that standards in mathematics in the national tests for 2001 were well below the national average and below the average for schools with similar intakes. However, these results need to be viewed with some caution since the size of groups tested each year is generally quite small and therefore variations in the attainment of individual pupils can disproportionately affect the overall grading. Although the grades have remained below or well below average, they conceal an overall improvement in the average points scored by the school in the tests. This improvement has been greater than the national trend over the past four years.

Children enter the school with low levels of attainment. Although they are given a good start in the Reception Year and make good progress, children's attainment at the end of their first year in school is well below what is expected nationally. Pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, but by the end of Year 2 attainment is well below average in English, mathematics and science. Progress continues to be satisfactory in

Years 3 to 6, but by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils likely to attain or exceed the national target of Level 4 remains well below average in English and is below average in mathematics and science. Inspection findings show that standards in Years 2 and 6 are also below average in art and design, DT, ICT and music. In geography, history and physical education, attainment is average. Attainment in religious education (RE) is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Diocesan Syllabus.

The school's targets for performance in the 2002 national tests are below the national averages for English and mathematics. However, they are more demanding than those set for 2001 and are challenging, given the fact that a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 are identified as having special educational needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are interested and keen to take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are good. Personal development is good in the Foundation Stage, but older pupils do not have enough opportunities to become independent learners.
Attendance	Greatly improved and now close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. Teaching was good or better in about two thirds of the 34 lessons observed and was very good in about one in ten lessons. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

A particular strength of teaching is the good relationships that teachers have developed with their pupils. Teachers know their pupils well, and this enables them to provide tasks that are generally matched to pupils' potential. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are used well and give good quality help to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. As a result of the good teaching, pupils learn well. They try hard and concentrate on what they have to do. Skills of numeracy and literacy are well taught, but there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills in other lessons. A weakness of teaching is in the marking of pupils' work. This is generally brief, and does not help pupils to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. However, the school lacks a clear overview of the whole curriculum, and as a result opportunities to develop links between subjects are sometimes missed. In some of the Foundation subjects the way in which pupils' skills are to be developed from year to year is unclear. The school's provision for ICT does not meet national requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils receive good quality help and their progress is carefully monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Arrangements for developing pupils' moral, social and cultural awareness are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know the pupils well. Newly implemented systems for tracking pupils' progress and for identifying pupils who need extra help have yet to result in improved attainment.

The school works hard to develop its partnership with parents, and many respond well. However, a small but significant number of parents do not support the school enough by playing a more active part in their children's education. Recently improved systems for monitoring and improving attendance have made a significant impact on rates of attendance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher has a very clear view of the way in which the school is to develop. Staff work well as a team and give her effective support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Governors know the school well and are supportive. They are taking an increasingly active role in monitoring the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teachers are good at looking critically at what they do and seeking ways to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its staff, accommodation and equipment satisfactorily. However, ICT equipment is not used enough in all subjects.

The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all adequate. Governors' understanding of the principles of 'best value' is not fully developed, but they are intuitively using these principles satisfactorily when making decisions. The governors' annual report to parents fails to meet legal requirements.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children are well taught and make good progress in lessons.• The school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed.• Staff are approachable.• The school helps the children to develop socially.• The children are expected to work hard.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The work that their children are given to do at home.

Inspectors' judgements support all of the parents' positive views.

Inspectors also share the concerns about homework expressed by some parents. During the course of the inspection, with the exception of reading, there was no evidence of homework being set or of pupils' learning being informed by work done at home. However, the expectation of the school that pupils will practice reading skills at home is not supported by a number of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the school is well below what is expected nationally. Over time, a small, but significant number of children joining the Reception Year group have had limited social skills, lack of basic literacy, little understanding of acceptable behaviour and apparently no understanding of the purpose or function of school. Where there are small numbers within each year group, as is the case at Marshland School, the impact of these children on the overall attainment of year groups can be significant.
2. In response to the needs of the pupils, which are quickly identified as they join the school, a large number are placed on the special educational needs (SEN) register. Currently, about a third of pupils are on the SEN register, most for emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. As a result of the school's assessment of its current Reception intake, a social skills group was established following discussions with the school's educational psychologist and the local authority learning support teacher. The school also has a large number of pupils, almost a fifth of its roll, from the traveller community.
3. Since such a high number of pupils have very clearly identified needs, seven LSAs are employed to help the class teachers. This is a large number for a school of this size. A further factor affecting the school's work is the fairly high proportion of families who move into or out of the area each year.
4. The school is smaller than most and the distribution of pupils between year groups is quite uneven, and so in some years very few pupils take the national tests in Years 2 and 6. The conclusions drawn from the results achieved in a single year may therefore be unreliable, because the performance of a single pupil can disproportionately affect the overall percentage score. A more statistically reliable sample is achieved by combining the results of individual pupils over the past three years. This method shows that, at the end of Year 2, just over half of the pupils reached or exceeded the national target of Level 2 in reading and about seven out of ten attained Level 2 in writing and mathematics. Although these results are well below average in national terms, they represent satisfactory progress when attainment on entry is considered.
5. Using a similar method of calculation, results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 show that just over six out of ten pupils reached or exceeded the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics compared with the national average of just over seven out of ten. In science, almost eight out of every ten Year 6 pupils reached Level 4, against the national average of over eight out of ten. Overall, these results are below the national average, but represent satisfactory progress over time. The overall results also conceal a year on year improvement that is greater than the national trend.
6. As they move from year to year, pupils achieve satisfactorily, although in the past they have made slow progress in moving through National Curriculum Levels. In previous years, progress in science and some of the Foundation subjects, such as art and design, DT and music, has been held back. This was because not enough time was spent teaching, assessment systems were underdeveloped, and the way in which pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to develop year by year was not clearly mapped out. The recently

appointed headteacher has ensured that the total teaching time now equals the nationally recommended minimum, and she is improving the way in which assessment information is used to track the progress of individual pupils. A curriculum 'map' has been drafted as a starting point for a review of the way in which planning between subjects is integrated.

7. The headteacher has also identified the need to raise standards in reading as a priority, and has ensured that better quality books are available as part of this initiative. The impact that low levels of reading skill have on test results was observed during the course of the inspection when pupils in Year 6 were tested on their knowledge of a unit of science work about 'light'. A number of pupils needed help from the teacher to read parts of text, and some of the average and higher-attainers misread some of the questions.

8. A further factor contributing to pupils' low levels of literacy is their limited skill in speaking. Pupils generally listen satisfactorily, as can be seen by their response to teachers' instructions, but many have limited vocabulary and do not always answer questions in well-constructed Standard English. Incorrect grammar is often not corrected by adults.

9. A further area for improvement is that of standards in ICT. National requirements have significantly increased in recent years, and the school has not kept pace with developments. There are not enough reliable computers, and there is not enough software. Not enough time is spent in teaching skills and pupils are not given adequate opportunities to practise the skills that are taught. During the course of the inspection, computers were rarely used in lessons because ICT is not properly integrated into the planning in all subjects.

10. In response to the nature of its intake, the school has significantly improved the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and this is now good. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage so that effective help can be provided. Individual education plans give clear indications of each pupil's difficulties and map out what needs to be done to address them. Teachers and LSAs work well together to ensure that the right amount of help is given and that individuals' progress is carefully monitored. These pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils, including those with special needs, are included in all activities. Learning support staff play an important part in the school's success in this area.

11. There were only minor gender differences in attainment in the national tests in 2001 for pupils in Years 2 and 6, and the progress of boys and girls is regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity. At the time of inspection, the differences were not significant.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school have improved since the previous inspection, and are now judged to be good. Most pupils display a keen enthusiasm for school and lessons. They are clearly interested in their lessons and most are happy to be involved in class activities. Some pupils make a significant contribution to discussions in class, but many lack sufficient vocabulary to express themselves well. Most pupils are well motivated, and the overall response to teachers is good. They are usually able to concentrate and work satisfactorily in lessons. Although some pupils can generate ideas of their own and solve problems for themselves, teachers sometimes direct most of the work. Often, during group working, pupils take responsibility for organising what they do, and they enjoy working with a partner as well as working as individuals.

13. The behaviour of pupils is satisfactory overall and, as a result pupils make adequate progress in lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Many children in

the Reception Year enter the school with poor social skills and little understanding of discipline. The school monitors their progress carefully, works hard with them, and is successful in developing acceptable standards of behaviour at this early stage. Most pupils understand that their actions can affect others and are prepared to accept responsibility for these actions. Their response to school rules is satisfactory. Pupils are mostly courteous, trustworthy and respectful. The school records indicate that there are rare instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour, but there was no evidence of this behaviour during the inspection. The school aims to respond very quickly to these incidents before they develop into more serious episodes. There is a very low incidence of exclusions.

14. Relationships within the school have remained good since the previous inspection, and pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills. Most are aware of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are sometimes given the opportunity to reflect and discuss their behaviour, feelings and experiences, but not all pupils are good at expressing their views. Most are prepared to listen to and consider other points of view. They show a well-developed respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others and are happy to talk about their own views and beliefs. There are few opportunities for pupils to show initiative, although many are accustomed to accepting the responsibility of doing routine tasks. For example, Year 6 pupils assist with closing doors, delivering registers and helping with morning assemblies. Pupils from all year groups are also democratically elected to serve on the School Council. Relationships between pupils and with staff and other adults are good, and the element of respect for teachers, adults and one another is high.

15. Overall, attendance at the school is now satisfactory and close to the national average. The level of authorised absences is about average, but unauthorised absences are slightly above the national average. This is a major improvement since the previous inspection. Daily classroom registration is conducted satisfactorily, and lateness to school and for classes is rare.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, teaching was good in about two-thirds of lessons and was satisfactory in the remaining third. Standards of teaching have improved since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall and there were a small number of unsatisfactory lessons.

17. A particular strength of teaching is the good relationships teachers have with their pupils. This begins in the Reception Year, where the teacher and LSAs have a good rapport with the children while setting clear expectations for their behaviour. As a result, children quickly learn the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and make good progress in their social development.

18. Teachers have at least sound subject knowledge across the curriculum, and base their teaching on nationally recommended schemes of work. Basic skills in reading and mathematics are well taught, reflecting the guidance of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy.

19. Owing to the small size of the school and the way in which numbers of pupils vary considerably from year group to year group, almost all of the pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Teachers therefore need to plan carefully and prepare thoroughly to be able to satisfactorily meet the needs of pupils of different maturity and potential attainment. They largely do this successfully, but need the support of skilled learning support staff to ensure that all pupils are kept busy. The lack of a full-time LSA in the Year 2 and 3 class does place

particularly heavy demands on the two teachers who share responsibility for this group of pupils. This is because Year 2 pupils need to work within the Key Stage 1 programmes of study of the National Curriculum, while those in Year 3 need to follow work designed for pupils in Key Stage 2.

20. Teachers' lesson plans are successful in identifying specific learning targets for each lesson and in detailing the main activities. Learning objectives are generally shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, so that they know precisely what they are expected to achieve. As a result, pupils generally concentrate well and try hard. In the best lessons, teachers skilfully refer back to the learning objectives during the plenary sessions, when learning is reviewed, and in this way help pupils to reflect on how much progress they have made. Where plans do not contain enough detail of how the lesson is to develop, the result can be that too much time is spent on one part of the lesson at the expense of others. For instance, over-long introductory sessions can result in not enough time for pupils to concentrate on the task in hand or for the teacher to review learning at the end.

21. Teachers know their pupils very well, and this enables them to provide work that is well matched to individuals' prior attainment. In some cases, this differentiation occurs through the learning process or the outcome of the task rather than through different tasks planned at different levels around the same theme. This method of teaching most commonly occurs in science lessons. A scrutiny of samples of pupils' previously completed science work showed many instances where all pupils in a class, regardless of ability, had completed the same task.

22. Better quality differentiation was observed in a Year 2 and 3 mathematics lesson around the theme of 'symmetry'. In this lesson, the teacher had planned activities of differing complexity to enable pupils to develop their understanding of symmetry in a practical way. The most complex task involved higher-attaining pupils in finding out how many different lines of symmetry there were in a variety of shapes, while lower-attaining pupils were making simple masks. Since the tasks were all based on the same basic theme, the introduction was relevant to all pupils, while all were able to contribute equally during the plenary session.

23. Teachers are generally skilled in managing the behaviour of their pupils. In almost all lessons, the guidance of the school's behaviour policy was consistently implemented. Lessons are well organised and resources are well prepared. Learning support assistant (LSAs) are effectively used to provide help for individuals with special educational needs, for example by sitting with pupils and helping to 'translate' the teacher's explanations, as observed in a Year 4 and 5 mathematics lesson. They are also of invaluable help to teachers when they help small groups of pupils during the lesson. This method of working benefits the pupils in the group, because they receive good quality help at frequent intervals, and also benefits the rest of the class because it frees the teacher to monitor the performance of pupils who are more capable of working independently.

24. Good quality help is provided for small groups of pupils who are periodically withdrawn from lessons for additional work in basic mathematics. A well-qualified LSA who has developed a good level of expertise in this work takes these groups.

25. Teachers are not consistent in their approach to developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. In the best lessons, teachers target their questions carefully and insist that pupils respond clearly and in whole, well-constructed sentences. Where pupils do not speak clearly or correctly, teachers then model the correct answers for pupils and ask them to repeat. A good example of this practice was observed in a Year 2 and 3 English lesson during a discussion between the teacher and pupils.

26. Teachers are skilled in boosting pupils' self-esteem and building their confidence. One of the most effective ways in which this is done is by ensuring that pupils can see how previous learning will help them to respond to the new challenges presented in their lessons. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 mathematics lesson on co-ordinates, the teacher very carefully ensured that pupils were reminded about their previous lessons and about work in geography on compass directions. This helped pupils to feel more confident, and resulted in most joining in enthusiastically by the end of the introduction to the lesson. Since many pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have previously learned, teaching needs to take this into account in almost every lesson and to present tasks in smaller steps. Currently, this practice is not seen in enough lessons.

27. Although teachers are good at assessing their pupils in lessons through skilful questioning, and generally know their pupils well, the quality of marking of pupils' work is a weakness. Teachers check all work, but there is almost no evidence of the marking resulting in improvements in pupils' work. This is particularly the case with older pupils. Marking generally consists of ticks, with very few evaluative comments or suggestions for improvement. Corrections of work as a result of marking are rarely seen.

28. About a fifth of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were unhappy with the amount of homework provided. Apart from reading, there was no inspection evidence to suggest that homework is set on a regular basis and no evidence of the use of homework in lessons.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

29. The quality and range of the curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. This maintains the position reported at the time of the last inspection. Issues for action, which related to the curriculum have been partially addressed. The amount of teaching time in Years 3 to 6 has recently been increased and is now at the nationally recommended minimum. However, the curriculum does not meet legal requirements in ICT and did not do so at the last inspection. The requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus for RE are met.

30. The balance of the curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and follows nationally agreed guidance. It is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6, in relation to science and some of the Foundation subjects. Although the curriculum in the Foundation subjects has improved and is now generally based on national guidance, the school has yet to clearly map out the way in which it proposes to develop pupils' skills, step by step, from Year 1 to 6 in science, art and design, DT and music. Almost all aspects of the school's provision for ICT are unsatisfactory. The school has not kept pace with the increased national requirements for ICT, and the use of ICT is not fully integrated into the planning in other subjects. In some subjects, such as science, geography and history, pupils have been unnecessarily repeating work in different year groups, at a similar level. This is due to the lack of a curriculum map,

giving an overview of what is to be taught in each year group, in each term, and identifying good cross-curricular links. Until shortly before the inspection, curriculum time for pupils in Years 3-6 fell well short of the nationally recommended minimum, with the result that, in previous years, there has not been enough time to cover the Foundation subjects in any depth.

31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with learning difficulties are now identified at an earlier age and receive better quality help. Classroom provision is organised to meet their specific needs. When pupils are given focused support, teaching ensures that their work is relevant to what is taking place in the classroom and meets the demands of their individual education plans.

32. Curriculum planning for implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory, and the basic skills of reading, writing and number are well taught. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Skills in ICT are not often used, or developed, in other areas of the curriculum.

33. Provision for extra-curricular activities, for pupils in Years 2 to 6, is good. They include musical activities such as the ocarina club, sporting activities such as the netball and football clubs, and an art club. A significant number of pupils take advantage of these opportunities, at least fifty in all. There are also inter-school matches in a range of sports.

34. Overall, the provision for equality of opportunity is good. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding according to their abilities. Learning support assistants (LSAs) give valuable help to pupils who experience difficulties, and pupils of potentially higher attainment are given work to extend their learning. However, the tasks given to these pupils are sometimes the same as those provided for their classmates and their work is only different from that produced by the rest of the class in terms of the quality of their answers or the quantity produced. Extra-curricular opportunities are open to both boys and girls. In this predominantly white school, there are often good planned opportunities for developing pupils' multicultural awareness.

35. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The governors have approved the school's sex education programme and the school makes provision for drug awareness and personal survival. Pupils consider health issues in science and in physical education. A strong emphasis is placed on survival skills in swimming lessons.

36. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. There are good links with the local church and chapel, which are used as a resource for learning. The vicar and minister are regular visitors to the school, often taking assemblies. The school nurse comes to talk to pupils about various health-related issues, and the dental nurse teaches pupils about healthy teeth. A police officer and fire officer help pupils to be aware of safety issues. The 'Friends of the School' association holds social and fund-raising events, which attract a number of local residents. The school is active in raising money for various charities, such as Comic Relief, the NSPCC and the RSPCA.

37. There are satisfactory relationships with partner institutions, in particular, Marshland High School, to which most of the pupils move at the end of Year 6. Teachers from the High School visit, and Year 6 pupils go to the High School for a 'taster' day. This helps to ensure an easy transition into secondary education and better continuity and progression in pupils' learning. There are no playgroups or nurseries in the village with which the school could establish links.

38. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. This is an improvement on the position reported at the time of the previous inspection, when provision was satisfactory overall and good in pupils' cultural development.

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The spiritual dimension is very evident in assemblies, but it is not firmly embedded in the curriculum. There are few planned opportunities for appreciation of the spiritual elements associated with music, art, dance, literature and science. Class prayers are said before children go home. There are opportunities to listen to all types of music, such as music from the Andes, blues and calypso, as well as music by the great composers. However, not enough opportunities are taken to provide pupils with moments of reflection in lessons. There are good links with the local church and chapel, and pupils visit them during their studies of special places and special people. Pupils learn about the customs observed by different religious groups and how they are important to those observing them, but opportunities for developing the spiritual element of these experiences are sometimes missed.

40. Arrangements for developing pupils' moral awareness are good. Care for all pupils, particularly younger children and pupils with special educational needs is implicit in the daily life of the school. The school is very supportive of all its pupils. Adults provide good examples of how to behave and work together. Respect for oneself and one another is encouraged, and good relationships prevail. Pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong actions, and their understanding of the impact of their actions on others is good. The fact that no oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, sexism or racism, was observed during the inspection is a tribute to the inclusive policy of the school and the encouragement of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Personal responsibility is promoted by the application of the behaviour policy, the home-school agreement, school and class rules, individual targets, and personal, social and health education lessons. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for various tasks, appropriate to their age. Moral issues are considered through stories from a range of cultures, such as 'The Brocaded Slipper' from Vietnam.

41. Pupils' social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to show consideration towards others and to work co-operatively in pairs and groups. They show respect for the feelings expressed by others and the contribution of their peers in class discussions. All pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within the class and the school as a whole. They develop their social skills through taking part in break, lunchtime and after school activities. There are good opportunities for them to socialise with others as they visit places of interest, meet with visitors to the school and participate in social and fund-raising activities, and in events organised by the Parent-Teacher Association. The special activity days, such as 'Book Day' enable pupils to socialise with pupils of all ages and with visitors to the school. Visits are made to elderly people in the community.

42. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught about the various cultural traditions and religious beliefs in the world through literature, history, geography, music and dance. In religious education lessons they study the special books, places, people, beliefs and ceremonies associated with Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Life in other countries, such as Peru, is studied in geography. Pupils meet with members of the Christian community, although there is little opportunity for them to meet members of other faiths. They visit places of cultural interest, such as Ely Cathedral. Music and dance from other countries, such as South America, are a feature of music lessons, and some multicultural instruments are used in music lessons. Visiting musicians and

storytellers enrich the curriculum. Citizenship is taught incidentally and promotes pupils' understanding. There is a satisfactory range of objects of religious interest and books, for promoting an understanding of the multicultural nature of society. Through carefully chosen texts, in the 'literacy hour', pupils learn to value the traditions of other cultures. Overall, pupils are being well prepared for life in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Overall, the procedures for Child Protection, safety and welfare of pupils are good. These procedures are now well established and the staff are fully aware of them. In general, teachers and LSAs have very good knowledge of the emotional state, physical condition and intellectual capacity of their pupils. Procedures for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well established. The high numbers of pupils from travellers' families are also well supported by the school and by appropriate outside agencies. The school helps children to protect themselves and others. For example, the local police and fire service both provide training schemes, which teach pupils awareness, self-help and self-reliance. Local authority Child Protection procedures are well established, and arrangements for detecting and dealing with possible instances of child abuse are good. The headteacher is the designated Child Protection co-ordinator. The school's arrangements for ensuring effective co-operation with other welfare agencies are also good. The school has good monitoring procedures for pupils on the Child Protection register. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

44. There is a well written Health and Safety policy in place, and the headteacher is the designated person responsible for health and safety. The school is good at ensuring that all staff and pupils are aware of health and safety issues. The level of supervision at mealtimes is good. Considerable emphasis is placed on identifying areas of concern through a regular 'risk assessment' conducted by the governors each year. The school has good procedures for dealing with accidents and emergencies, and almost all members of staff are qualified to give first aid.

45. Overall, the way in which the school monitors and promotes regular attendance is very good. The procedures for recording and reporting attendance comply with statutory requirements. The school has recently introduced very good attendance monitoring procedures that feature a very quick follow-up when any pupil is absent. Improving attendance has been a very high priority, but only since the beginning of the academic year has the actual attendance reflected the effort put in by the school. These arrangements represent a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

46. Systems for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are good. The school's behaviour policy is good and is implemented consistently across all year groups. The school creates a happy atmosphere, which promotes good behaviour and self-discipline. The systems for monitoring and eliminating negative behaviour are also good. Unsatisfactory behaviour is managed well by the school. It involves a yellow and red card system similar to that used by football referees. The anti-bullying policy is good, and the school maintains good records of any instances of oppressive behaviour. The rare instances of bullying are very firmly dealt with by the school. The school's anti-social behaviour policies are usually effective in preventing further unhappy incidents between pupils.

47. Overall, the school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance are satisfactory. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and are well established for children in the Foundation Stage. The school meets the requirements for statutory assessments satisfactorily. Some teachers make good use of

assessment information to guide their lesson planning, but this practice is not yet consistent across all year groups. The detailed testing of pupils and recording of their attainment is very well established across the school, but the monitoring and evaluation of these statistics are not yet a consistent and integral part of teaching procedures in all year groups.

48. The quality of educational and personal support and guidance provided for pupils is good. Good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are in place. Individual education plans for pupils identified as having special educational needs are of good quality and help the pupils to make good progress. The quality of the school's liaison with outside professional agencies to support special needs pupils is good.

49. Policies to ensure the support and guidance of pupils are effective. The impact of support and guidance on pupils' progress is significant. The school uses the acknowledgement of achievement as a means to encourage more progress. The school maintains detailed personal records of pupils' progress, and these records are updated regularly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The overall view of the school by parents is that it is good, and most recognise and approve of the improvements made since the previous inspection. The level of response to the parents' questionnaire was high. Most of the parents are happy with the quality of education provided, but unfortunately the amount of homework provided is not supported by about a quarter of those who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire.

51. Most parents think that the school sends out sufficient information and that they are kept well informed. They also think the staff are approachable and that the school is managed well. They believe that their children are expected to work hard and that socially their children develop well. The inspection evidence justifies these views.

52. The school tries hard to promote effective and productive links with parents. The induction procedures for new pupils are good, and transfer arrangements for pupils moving on to secondary schools are effective. The quality of documentation produced for parents, including the prospectus, is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In contrast, the governors' annual report for parents is bland, dull and does not comply with statutory requirements. Important items of information about attendance issues, finances, the school's provision for disabled pupils, and the implementation of the SEN policy are missing. Parents are periodically consulted and informed about what is to be taught to their children, and adequate information is available about homework expectations and forthcoming topics.

53. The annual written reports about pupils' progress are of good quality. These reports contain detailed descriptions of what pupils have been studying and what they are able to do. They also tell parents and pupils what areas need further development. However, they do not give parents any indication of how well their child is doing in relation to what is expected nationally. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept properly informed of how their children are progressing and play a full part in reviews of their children's progress.

54. The school shows a keen determination to involve parents in the life of the school, but not enough parents reciprocate this keenness. There is evidence, particularly in reading, that for some pupils the absence of interest and help at home is slowing down the rate of learning. Many parents appear to be passively content to let the school do all the work. In some families, lack of confidence and skills prevents adults from supporting their own

children. The school has attempted to confront this problem by organising a family literacy training program, but so far it has had little success. However, parents satisfactorily support sports and extra-curricular activities both during and after school. The school has a thriving 'Friends of the School' association that raises significant funds to support and enrich the learning environment, but this is organised by only a handful of parents.

55. Teachers are usually available at the beginning and end of the school day for informal discussions with parents. The school has found that some parents do not respond well to homework and reading diaries, so in some cases there is no written communication link with parents. The impact of the home-school agreement also differs from family to family, but attendance is one key area where the majority of parents are now supportive.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is good. The headteacher has made a significant impact within the relatively short time since her appointment, and has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. The effects of a number of the initiatives put into place by the headteacher, such as the introduction of a new 'core' reading scheme, have yet to be seen in terms of higher standards. However, some of her actions, such as her drive to improve attendance, have already been successful. Parents are greatly appreciative of the work of the headteacher and of her accessibility. Almost all of those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school is well led and managed.

57. Teaching and non-teaching staff work well as a team, and the explicit aims and values of the school are fully reflected in their work.

58. Following the previous inspection, the school needed to address nine key issues for action, and it prepared a sound action plan to set out its response. Overall, progress in addressing the key issues has been satisfactory. The issues, together with the action taken by the school, are as follows:

Key Issue 1: *'Raise attainment in English, mathematics, science, ICT and RE'*

59. Although the overall grades for performance in the core subjects, based on the average points scored, have not improved, the underlying trend of improvement in the school's average points score has been greater than the national trend over the past four years. Conclusions drawn from direct year-on-year comparison of national test results are unreliable because of differences between the small groups of pupils tested. Standards in ICT have not improved since the last inspection because the school has not kept pace with the increase in national expectations in this subject. However, standards in RE are better, and are in line with those expected by the local Agreed Syllabus. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made in addressing this issue.

Key Issue 2: *'Improve the level of attendance by monitoring registers and checking the reasons for all absences.'*

60. Very good progress has been made. Attendance rates have dramatically improved and are now close to the national average. Absences are quickly noted and parents are contacted to find out why their children are away. The result has been an increase in attendance by almost four percentage points since last year.

Key Issue 3: *'Improve the provision for special educational needs, by identifying all pupils who need to be on the register and ensuring they receive appropriate support.'*

61. Good progress has been made. Pupils' special needs are identified at an early stage, and all pupils who should be on the SEN register are now included.

Key Issue 4: *'Amend the assessment policy to include ICT and RE and use the same method for recording pupils' attainment as in English and mathematics.'*

62. Progress has been satisfactory. Assessment procedures now comply with requirements.

Key Issue 5: *'Improve the consistency of approach to pupils' behaviour by establishing whole school rewards and sanctions and provide appropriate training for staff.'*

63. Pupils' behaviour remains satisfactory, as reported at the time of the last inspection. Therefore progress in addressing this issue has been satisfactory. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and a whole-school system for managing pupils' behaviour is in place. Rewards and sanctions are applied consistently. Where necessary, parents are contacted so that concerns can be discussed. A School Council has been established, which gives pupils a forum for discussing issues such as behaviour.

Key Issue 6: *'Improve school planning by preparing an outline two to three year school development plan, with associated financial forecasts.'*

64. Good progress has been made. A longer-term plan for the school's development has now been produced. The plan is sound and sets out clear detail of action proposed for the current year, with an outline of what is intended during the following two years. However, statements of how success is to be measured in the completion of tasks are sometimes too imprecise, and in these instances objective monitoring cannot be carried out.

Key Issue 7: *'Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that teacher vacancies are effectively filled.'*

65. This has been a very difficult task for the school to resolve, particularly in light of the national shortage of teachers. The school has been fortunate to maintain staffing levels despite the very poor response to its recruitment strategies as a result of its isolated location.

Key Issue 8: *'Improve the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs by providing training for special needs assistants and all support staff.'*

66. Progress has been good. There is an usually high number of LSAs for a school of this size. The school has organised training for them, and these personnel provide skilled help

for pupils in lessons. In addition, a well-qualified member of this team is now taking groups of targeted pupils for 'booster classes' in mathematics.

Key Issue 9: *'Review the level of administrative provision to improve the quality of support for the headteacher and staff each afternoon.'*

67. Progress has been satisfactory. The hours in which the school office is staffed have been increased, and the headteacher and staff receive administrative support of good quality.

68. Most of the governors are closely connected with the school and are very committed and supportive. They know the school very well, and have a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses through their regular visits and through their day-to-day contact with parents, children and staff. Overall, the governors satisfactorily monitor the work of the school and help to shape its strategic direction. Governors' understanding of their role in respect of the curriculum has particularly developed since the appointment of the present headteacher. Governors' understanding of the principles of 'best value' is not fully developed, but they are intuitively using these principles satisfactorily when making decisions. Governors have ensured that legal requirements are fully met, with the exception of their annual report to parents, which has a number of shortcomings, and provision for ICT. There is a positive relationship between the headteacher and the governors. Appraisal of the performance of the headteacher and teaching staff is securely in place through the school's application of Performance Management procedures.

69. Finances are well maintained and grants received for specific purposes, such as for special educational needs, are spent well. The management of special educational needs is effective. The progress of pupils on the SEN register is closely monitored, and all legal requirements for SEN are met. The leadership of the school and all members of staff show a clear commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and do what they can to ensure this. Although after-school activities are open to all, some pupils are unable to attend because of transport difficulties.

70. Information and communication technology (ICT) systems satisfactorily support the school's administration. However, the use of ICT in support of the curriculum is underdeveloped.

71. The overall number of staff and their range of qualifications are well matched to the present number of pupils on roll. Teamwork is a very significant feature, and all staff work closely as a team. Job descriptions are satisfactory, and teachers and support staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities. Administrative and other staff are well deployed.

72. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils on the roll. Classrooms are adequate for current pupil numbers in each year group, and the accommodation is suitable for the whole age range. The provision for indoor physical education is very limited, but the provision for outdoor activities is good. There is also adequate space for large equipment for the under fives. The school and its grounds provide an attractive and stimulating environment for pupils, and the accommodation is well maintained and in good condition.

73. Learning resources are generally satisfactory and are sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is an appropriate range of resources, and these are available in sufficient quantity. The quality and condition of resources are satisfactory and they are well deployed and accessible. Many of the resources are well matched to pupils' age and needs. The range of books in the library and classrooms is broadly satisfactory, although library resources are not used regularly by pupils. The school has adequate audio and video equipment. However, ICT resources are unsatisfactory, although plans are in hand to rectify this deficiency. The school makes effective use of museums, galleries and field study centres to enrich the curriculum.

74. When the effectiveness of the school is determined, account has to be taken of the unfavourable social circumstances of many pupils, their low attainment on entry and the quality of education that they receive. Although standards are below average, pupils are well taught. The recently appointed headteacher, who provides good leadership, has already made an impact on rates of attendance, and has put into place a number of initiatives designed to raise standards. All staff provide good quality care for pupils and show a clear commitment to improve attainment. Although the school's income per pupil is higher than is found in the majority of schools it is not untypical of small rural schools. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In order to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Raise standards in English and mathematics.

In English by:

- * placing an increased focus on developing pupils' skills in speaking;
- * improving home/school reading procedures;
- * ensuring that pupils learn to take responsibility for planning and proof-reading their own work.

In English and mathematics by:

- * giving pupils more precise guidance on what they each need to do to improve further;
- * reviewing the way in which learning is planned, so that pupils take smaller, more regular, steps forward, building securely on what has already been achieved.

- Raise standards and improve the way in which the curriculum is planned in science, art and design, DT, and music by:
 - * clearly setting out the way in which skills are to be developed in these subjects as pupils move through the school from Year 1 to Year 6;
 - * indicating, on the curriculum plans, precisely what is expected of each year group in terms of the skills and knowledge to be taught;
 - * ensuring that the criteria used to assess pupils' progress are based on the curriculum plan, and that the criteria are precise and measurable;
 - * producing a curriculum 'map' to provide an overview of what is to be taught to each year group in each half term, thus making it easier to identify potential links between areas of the curriculum.
- Raise attainment in ICT by:
 - * ensuring that requirements are fully met in all elements of the subject;
 - * integrating ICT into subject planning across the curriculum;
 - * improving the school's hardware and software;
 - * clearly mapping out the step-by-step development of pupils' skills year by year, and linking this to systematic assessment procedures;
 - * ensuring that skills are directly taught and that pupils have enough time to practise what they have learned.

- Improve the quality of marking of pupils' work by:
 - * reviewing the school marking policy to ensure that marking is a useful tool for pupils to use to improve their work.

- A further issue, which the school should consider, is to ensure that the governors' annual report to parents contains all of the information required by law.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12	56	32	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents about three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	102
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.3	School data	1.1
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	10	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Girls	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Total	8	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	53 (57)	67 (71)	67 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Girls	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Total	7	11	6
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	47 (71)	73 (71)	40 (71)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	5	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Girls	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Total	8	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	53 (92)	60 (67)	80 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Girls	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
	Total	4	7	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	27 (33)	47 (50)	67 (58)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

The results of boys and girls are not reported separately, because the numbers of boys tested in Key Stage 1 and girls tested in Key Stage 2 are small, and therefore the performance of individuals may be identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	94
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	223,608.00
Total expenditure	217,944.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,369.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,183.00
Balance carried forward to next year	11,847.00

**Qualified teachers and support staff:
Nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

69
41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	17	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	54	12	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	44	17	2	7
The teaching is good.	56	42	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	27	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	37	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	42	7	0	5

The school distributed one questionnaire per family instead of one per pupil. About 60 per cent of the questionnaires distributed were returned.

Ten parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

76. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make a positive start to their learning. They enter Reception at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five, with little pre-school experience. The number of children in the Foundation Stage is small and attainment on entry varies from year to year. Children in the current Reception Year entered the school with standards that were well below those expected for children of their age in all areas of learning³. Their attainment improves steadily as a result of good teaching, which leads to good learning. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The new curriculum for children in the Reception Year has been introduced and implemented well. All children achieve satisfactorily. Children with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their individual targets, because of the good support they receive. Teaching is good in all six areas of learning detailed below. Teaching and non-teaching staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children, and planning is based on clear objectives for all areas of learning. Assessments take place on entry to the Reception Year and inform the planning of future work. Good records are kept of children's academic progress and personal development and are shared with parents and the teacher of the class to which children progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. The attainment of children in personal, social and emotional development is well below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Year. They make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential. The attainment of about a third of them matches the standards expected for children of this age at the end of their time in Reception.

78. The children settle well into the routines of school, and the calm, welcoming atmosphere helps them to feel confident and secure. The staff ensure that all children are fully included in the activities provided, and quickly form good relationships with them. Children learn to work together and play co-operatively, for example in the 'role play' area. They gain the confidence to try out new activities and learn to organise themselves independently, because materials are easily accessible. Activities are carefully planned and structured so that children are enabled to work well individually and in groups. Everyday routines encourage self-confidence and a sense of belonging. Children act as helpers and carry out special jobs throughout the day. They gain increasing self-control and begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. The ability to take turns is developed, for instance at the computer, and children learn to show consideration towards others. Adults insist that children tidy away equipment that they have used, and this helps them to develop respect for their environment and the property of others. Children adapt well to increased independence and responsibilities. They begin to develop concentration and perseverance, as they practise their writing and reading skills. All children gain confidence in expressing their feelings as they talk about their families and learn that not all families are the same. They also show a developing respect for the contribution of others. Adults use every opportunity to reinforce good behaviour. For example, they ensure that children say '*please*' and '*thank you*', and praise them when they line up sensibly.

³ There are six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. These are: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication Language and Literacy, Mathematical Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Creative Development and Physical Development.

Communication, language and literacy

79. The attainment of children in communication, language and literacy is well below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Year. Children make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential. By the end of their time in Reception, about a third attain the standards in reading which are expected for children of this age, and about half attain the expected standards in writing.

80. There are many formal and informal opportunities to develop language skills, as for example when children speak to the class about their interests and favourite toys. Direct teaching and practical activities introduce and consolidate the key skills of language. Children are encouraged to ask questions and give answers, but there is not enough emphasis on the use of good diction and full sentences. On entry to the Reception Year, most pupils speak indistinctly, in words or short phrases, and their progress is slow. They learn to concentrate when listening to stories and to the contribution of other children to discussions. Adults develop children's listening skills, by insisting on full attention when they are talking and by ensuring that children listen carefully to each other. They speak clearly, thus setting a good example. Adults listen well to the children and extend discussions so that children become increasingly confident speakers. Children become familiar with a range of traditional rhymes. They begin to blend sounds to form words, and higher-attaining pupils read simple books with repetitive texts. Children benefit from the school's early introduction of phonics and the practice of teaching letter sounds and shapes and building up 'word banks', but this practice is not developed consistently as pupils move up the school. Most children write their names satisfactorily and about three-fifths are on target to be able to write simple sentences by the end of their time in the Reception Year. The teacher and learning support staff take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and encourage them to explain what they are doing. In literacy lessons, the teacher carefully chooses fiction and non-fiction books which stimulate children's interest in words, spelling, rhyming patterns and simple punctuation. Children are encouraged to share books with adults at home. Where parents support the school in this, pupils make steady progress, but there are a number of parents who do not support the school and their child in this way. The result is that since reading is the key to all learning, their children are at a disadvantage.

Mathematical development

81. The attainment of children in mathematical development is well below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Year. They make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential. The attainment of about half of them matches the standards expected for children of this age by the end of their time in the Reception Year.

82. Children gain confidence in counting as they join in number rhymes and songs. They learn to sort and order items, as they play with a range of carefully selected, colourful apparatus. Half the children confidently count to ten and beyond and are beginning to order numbers accurately to ten. They begin to use vocabulary such as '*more than*', '*less than*', '*add one more*', '*take one away*', '*how many altogether*' and '*how many are left?*' Opportunities for practical activities are suitably planned and children develop sufficient vocabulary to describe colour, size and shape. Most children are able to recognise flat shapes, such as a square, rectangle, triangle and circle. They gain some knowledge of capacity and weight through practical experiences with sand and water. Mathematical vocabulary is emphasised, and classroom resources reinforce mathematical concepts well. There are displays, books and resources related to number, games, puzzles, weighing

activities and computer programs. Work is matched well to children's prior learning and, at the end of each lesson, teachers help children to explain what they have learned. An example was seen where the children worked in the class shop, buying items from the shop keeper and receiving change, using coins up to 10p in value.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. The attainment of children in knowledge and understanding of the world is well below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Year. They make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential. The attainment of about a third matches the standards expected for children of this age by the end of their time in Reception.

84. Children develop early investigative skills as they learn about the layout of the school and the people who work in it. They learn to identify features of the natural world in the school grounds, plant sunflower seeds, grow hyacinths and daffodils, and study new growth. They show a keen interest in the differences between night and day and the changing seasons. Stimulating activities are linked well to the early learning goals⁴, and teachers ensure that children gain knowledge, skills and understanding in practical contexts. When exploring and investigating the environment, children talk about the features they like and dislike. They learn about people in the community who help them. The Road Safety Officer talks to them about safety. Children begin to develop a sense of time and relationships as they talk about themselves and their families, and gain a sound sense of the past as they study old toys, such as teddy bears, dolls and prams. They learn about belonging to different groups in religious education and show a developing respect for people of different cultures and beliefs. To enable this to happen, the school ensures that the children's toys represent a variety of cultures and that many of their stories come from far-away countries. Children develop their scientific knowledge through the study of materials. For instance, when studying ice cubes, they learned that some changes are reversible. They learn about 'healthy living', as they make sandwiches and fruit salad, and the dental nurse talks to them about healthy teeth. Children are able to use the mouse on the computer and follow programs on toys, rhyming words, jigsaws and patterns. They use programmable toys to support their learning. However, ICT is not generally used enough in the support of children's learning. Children build and construct with an increasingly wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources, and are taught to adapt their work where necessary.

Physical development

85. The attainment of children in physical development is well below expectations for their age, on entry to the Reception Year. They make good progress and achieve well in relation to their potential. The attainment of three-quarters of them matches the standards expected for children of this age by the end of their time in Reception.

86. Regular use is made of the outdoor area, which is soon to be improved. The school hall is used for physical education. Children progressively develop their ability to move with confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination, in safety. After much hard work on the part of adults, most children now demonstrate a developing awareness of space and of others. They develop their skills further on low apparatus, and travel around, under and over apparatus for balancing and climbing. The majority of children are beginning to recognise the importance of keeping healthy and the things that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They

⁴ These are standards, known as the Early Learning Goals, for each area of learning. The majority of children are expected to have achieved these by the time they start Year 1.

recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well. Children are developing their ability to handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely with increasing control. Half the children demonstrate developing hand and eye co-ordination when engaged in cutting and gluing.

Creative development

87. The attainment of children in creative development is well below expectations for their age, on entry to the Reception Year. They make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential. The attainment of about half of them matches the standards expected for their age by the end of their time in Reception.

88. Their creativity is developed within a supportive learning environment. Children explore and experiment, developing confidence as they try out new ideas, with adults working alongside them, talking to them about their work and introducing appropriate vocabulary. Colour and texture are explored through a range of resources and sensory experiences and children are encouraged to talk about their observations. They explore what happens when they mix colours and they understand the terms '*darker/lighter*', and '*thicker/thinner*'. They experiment well with different media to draw themselves and others. Form and shape are explored in two and three dimensions, as the children create satisfactory models of houses, swings and moving pictures, thus extending their knowledge of joining techniques. They eagerly contribute to collages and explore printing techniques. They learn about symmetry, as they make sound symmetrical patterns. Children occasionally gain experience with clay. All children enjoy music. Much encouragement is given to help them to learn how to use their imagination and communicate their ideas through music. They sing familiar Nursery rhymes and songs with enthusiasm and attempt to tap out repeated rhythms and 'compose' music. They are developing their ability to sing tunefully, in unison. They explore a range of musical instruments and develop a reasonable understanding of pitch as they experiment with high and low sounds. Social skills and imagination are carefully developed as children dramatise stories and take part in role-play, but they still require much support in this.

ENGLISH

89. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress was unsatisfactory and standards attained in Years 2 and 6 were well below the standards expected for pupils of a similar age. The school has made satisfactory progress since then. Although standards in English have yet to improve, the recently appointed headteacher has put in place a number of initiatives to address these weaknesses and pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall.

90. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests in reading, the proportions of Year 2 pupils attaining either the national target of Level 2 or the higher Level 3 were very low. Standards were also very low in comparison with those of schools deemed to be similar because they have about the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. In writing, the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining Level 2 was also very low, and no pupils attained Level 3. In comparison with similar schools, standards in writing were well below average. The groups of pupils tested each year are generally small, and therefore the performance of individuals can disproportionately affect the school's overall results for a particular year. However, when results over the past three years are combined and viewed as a whole, to lessen the effect of small year groups, standards are seen to have been consistently well below those expected nationally in both reading and writing.

91. Results of the 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils were slightly better than those of Year 2. The proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 in English was well below average, while the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was below the national average. Overall, standards were well below the average for similar schools. As in Year 2, the groups of pupils tested each year are generally quite small and so the performance of individuals has a much greater impact on the overall result than in schools where year groups are much larger. In the year 2000, for example, the school performed exceptionally well because fewer pupils in that year had special educational needs. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in that year was well above the national average. However, when results are considered as a whole, over a three-year period, they are below the national average.

92. Although overall results have been below average, the average points scored by the school in the Year 6 national tests has gradually improved. This improvement has been at a greater rate than the national trend over the past four years.

93. Inspection findings show that attainment, in terms of the proportion of Year 6 pupils likely to attain or exceed the national target of Level 4 by the end of the school year, is well below average in English. In Year 2, standards are well below average in reading and writing. From a low starting point, pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their own potential, but make slow progress in terms of their year-on-year progression through National Curriculum Levels. This is because many of them have learning difficulties, have great difficulty in remembering what they have been taught from day to day and do not have regular opportunities to practise skills, such as reading, at home. As part of its drive to raise standards, the school has recently purchased new reading books to help pupils to develop their skills in a more systematic way.

94. The regular use of the reading scheme and the study of texts in the 'literacy hour' are helping to raise standards for some pupils. There are a number of good readers, whose parents support the school by listening to their children read on a daily basis and sharing books with them. These are self-motivated and confident readers. They develop a keen interest in reading and build up a bank of favourite authors, such as JK Rowling, Roald Dahl and Jacqueline Wilson. Pupils read to teachers and LSAs, but not on a frequent enough basis to raise standards. The poorest readers are those who have limited access to books at home and whose parents do not listen to them reading or enjoy books with them. Many pupils have no strategies for reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning, despite the fact that phonics are well taught in the Foundation Stage. Most pupils respond well to a range of texts in literacy lessons and across the curriculum. They show understanding of significant ideas, themes, events and characters. They are taught to retrieve and collate information from a range of sources, and know how to use the school library. Pupils are expected to read at home for a short period each day. A number of pupils belong to local libraries and read an increasingly wide range of fiction and non-fiction books.

95. Progress in writing is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual learning targets, when they receive additional support in literacy sessions. Other groups of pupils benefit from the extra help given to them through additional literacy lessons. Unfortunately, many pupils have considerable difficulty in remembering what they have been taught and in applying their skills. The improvement of writing continues to be a priority in the school. More rigorous monitoring and tracking is beginning to be carried out, to ensure that all pupils are working at the right level and individual targets can be set. At present, many pupils lack the skills to enable them to correct their own work and to plan, draft and redraft their work. There are not enough

planned opportunities for writing in all curriculum areas. Appropriate emphasis is placed on handwriting, but not on phonics and spelling skills. Writing objectives are shared with pupils each lesson and an evaluation session takes place at the end, but it does not always give pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own work and assess what they need to do in order to progress further.

96. The attainment of pupils in speaking and listening is well below the standards expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils are friendly, and converse easily with adults in the classroom, corridors, dining room and playground. In the shared reading sessions, they listen well and generally respond well to questions and discussions. There is, however, a lack of carefully planned opportunities to promote speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. Although, pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and explain their views in a variety of situations, they tend to speak in single words or short phrases, and some of what they say is difficult to decipher. In a Year 2 and 3 literacy lesson, pupils were spoken to in full sentences and were expected to reply in a full sentence, but this practice is not general throughout the school. Incorrect grammar, such as '*I done it*' is often not corrected by adults.

97. The strategies for teaching literacy are satisfactory. Planning is in line with the National Literacy Strategy, and the structure of the 'literacy hour' is helpful in ensuring continuity in pupils' learning. Investment in some good resources has helped teachers in their delivery of the curriculum, but there is a need for more big books and group readers. In the best lessons, there is a strong emphasis on the use of subject-specific vocabulary, thus extending pupils' subject knowledge and general vocabulary. However, lists of subject-related vocabulary are not always displayed in all classrooms, so that reference can be regularly made to them.

98. Books are generally well used to promote interest and to develop pupils' skills. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 learned to find information from non-fiction books and to sequence sentences to make sense, using capital letters and full stops. In Year 2, pupils thought about story settings in reading and writing and considered how different settings influence events and behaviour. Year 3 pupils read 'The Brocaded Slipper', a story set in Vietnam, and compared it with other traditional stories. In writing their own traditional story, they concentrated on producing interesting opening paragraphs, setting the scene, introducing the characters, and engaging the reader's interest. Year 4 and 5 pupils studied 'The Sword in the Stone' and worked collaboratively, in pairs, to edit their own stories, using more accurate and interesting words than common choices such as '*nice*' and '*good*'. Pupils in Year 6 studied 'The Lady of Shalott', as part of their study of significant poets and writers of the past.

99. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teaching was very good in three of the six lessons observed and good in the other three. Teachers' planning is detailed and sets out clear learning objectives. These are shared with pupils and then reviewed at the end of lessons. As a result, pupils are interested and work with concentration and independence. Teachers have high expectations and pupils apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. Teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding, and teach basic skills well. As a result, pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good. Good class management and relationships lead to satisfactory behaviour, which, in turn, promotes good learning. Time and resources are used well and pupils' productivity and pace of working is good. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is instrumental to pupils' progress. Marking is, however, minimal and does not help pupils to know how to make further progress. There was no evidence of homework being given or reviewed in lessons during the inspection.

100. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they receive good quality help. Learning support assistants (LSAs) play a valuable role in providing this help, for instance by working with groups of pupils during the 'literacy hour'.

101. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory, and the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum is enriched by activities such as regular 'book days', a book club and visits by storytellers and poets. Pupils are given opportunities to consider moral issues in relation to the shared texts. For example, pupils in Year 3 discussed good and evil, in association with a story set in Vietnam. Pupils' social development is enhanced through class groupings and discussions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is sometimes used in literacy lessons for word processing and research, but its use is considerably under-developed.

102. Leadership and management of the subject is good and ensures clear educational direction. The subject leader has an overview of teaching and learning, teachers' planning, and pupils' work. Resources are adequate and are used satisfactorily. The school library is very small, but is used well to promote library skills. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The action taken to meet the school's targets is good, and there is a shared commitment to further improvement.

MATHEMATICS

103. Results of the national tests for 2001 show that the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the national target of Level 2 and above was very low, and no pupils attained the higher Level 3. The situation was little better in Year 6, where the proportion of pupils reaching the national target of Level 4 was well below average and the proportion at the higher Level 5 was below national expectations. In comparison with the results of similar schools, the school's performance was well below average in Year 6 and very low in Year 2.

104. Within the context of this school, with generally small numbers of pupils tested each year, the results from a single year need to be viewed with some caution. Nevertheless, when results from the past three years are viewed as a whole, to provide a larger and statistically more reliable sample, the situation only improves slightly. In Year 2, only seven out of every ten pupils tested attained Level 2, which is well below the national average of nine out of ten. In Year 6, just over six out of ten pupils attained Level 4, which is below the national average of just over seven out of ten. However, the pupils at Marshland School enter with low levels of understanding, and a third are identified as having special educational needs. In this context, it can be seen that while pupils make slow progress in moving through National Curriculum Levels, most achieve satisfactorily in relation to their potential.

105. The recently appointed headteacher has introduced a number of initiatives designed to raise attainment, but these have yet to make an impact on national test results. One of these initiatives is the introduction of a system to make better use of information from periodic assessments of pupils and to track the progress of each individual as pupils move through the school. Pupils identified as needing extra help now take part in small group sessions taken by one of the school's skilled LSAs. These pupils greatly benefit from the regular opportunities to go over basic skills and then practise these further. Since they are working in small groups, they are required to play a more active part than might be the case in a whole class lesson. As they develop greater competence, they also grow in confidence.

106. Inspection findings broadly mirror test results. Attainment in Year 2 is well below average, in terms of the proportion of pupils within this small group who are likely to reach Level 2 by the end of the school year. In Year 6, attainment is below average.

107. Standards in Year 6 are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Results of the national tests taken shortly before the previous inspection showed that attainment was well below the national average. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. However, rates of progress vary considerably between year groups because of factors such as the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the relative maturity of pupils. For example, attainment and progress in the Year 2 and Year 3 class as a whole is adversely affected because of the learning difficulties of many pupils. In contrast, attainment and progress in the Year 4 and Year 5 class is much better, because pupils have matured and because there are proportionately fewer of them with special needs. Throughout the school, a significant number of pupils of lower attainment have difficulty in remembering what they have been taught previously.

108. By the time pupils are in Year 2, most show a developing knowledge of the place value of numbers up to 100 and accurately add and subtract single and two digit numbers. Recognition of the patterns created by numbers helps pupils to learn about odd and even numbers and to understand concepts such as '*lots of*' or '*sets of*' when learning their two, five and ten times tables. Basic skills of estimation which are taught in Year 1 help pupils to decide whether or not their answers are likely to be correct. Simple work about fractions is introduced in a practical way, for example by folding shapes such as squares to find different ways of dividing them into halves. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are much more confident in manipulating numbers and accurately use their skills to double or halve numbers such as 58 or 96. Higher-attaining pupils have a reasonable understanding of negative numbers. Sound skills of estimation help pupils when they are using calculators to solve problems such as the calculation of square roots. In general, though, ICT equipment such as calculators and computers is not well used in any classes to help pupils to develop their skills in mathematics. Pupils' knowledge of shapes develops well, and by Year 6 pupils are successfully classifying polyhedra in different ways, using correct terminology such as '*faces*' and '*edges*'.

109. The quality of teaching is good. During the course of the inspection, seven lessons were observed; one of these was very good, four were good and two were satisfactory. Strengths of teaching lie in teachers' skills in managing their pupils and in their skilful use of questions to determine the depth of individuals' understanding. The application of these skills often results in work being well matched to the potential of individual pupils, thus providing realistic and achievable challenges for them. The good working atmosphere created enables pupils to get on with their work without undue interruption, and as a result they produce good quantities of work. Teachers are also good at teaching basic skills through the clarity of their explanations based on their own secure knowledge of what they have to teach. A very good example of teaching of high quality was observed in a Year 4 and 5 lesson about co-ordinates. By linking the lesson closely with what had been taught on the previous day, the teacher reassured pupils that they would be able to build on what they already knew. One very good technique used was asking pupils to work out the answers to questions about co-ordinates on their fingers and then requiring all pupils to show their answers at the same time, on the command: '*one...two...three!*' This method enabled the teacher to assess the understanding of each individual and therefore plan accordingly.

110. Learning support assistants (LSAs) are generally used well and provide skilled help to individuals or small groups within lessons. However, the deployment of these assistants is uneven. In particular, more help is needed in the Year 2 and 3 class in which teachers have to meet the demands of pupils in two different key stages.

111. Weaknesses of teaching lie in marking of pupils' work and, sometimes, in the way in which pupils' work is organised. In all of the samples of pupils' previously completed work, marking was brief and did nothing to help pupils to improve. There was no evidence of any pupils responding to the marking of their work. On some occasions, recorded work is based on the format determined by photocopied worksheets. While this ensures that all pupils cover the same basic tasks, this method of working does not always challenge higher-attaining pupils to develop their own methods of tabulation or recording.

112. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their work, listen carefully and concentrate well. The way in which lessons are organised helps pupils to develop social skills such as learning to share equipment and working together. All pupils, regardless of their potential, are fully included in lessons.

113. Overall, the curriculum is good. It closely follows the nationally recommended Numeracy Strategy and is based on commercially produced materials. However, opportunities to integrate the use of ICT into mathematics are generally not taken. Opportunities for developing pupils' skills in numeracy through other subjects are satisfactory.

114. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear view of the way in which mathematics is to develop. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff and a firm commitment to improve standards.

SCIENCE

115. Results of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that the proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 was well below average and the proportion at the higher Level 5 was below average. In comparison with those of similar schools, overall standards in science were about average. When test results over the past three years are considered, to provide a statistically more reliable sample than that of a single small year group, standards are below average. Within this period of time, almost eight out of ten pupils have attained Level 4 against the national average of over eight out of ten. These results broadly reflect inspection findings, which indicate that attainment in Year 6 is below average overall.

116. Inspection findings in Year 2 are that attainment is well below average. This is an improvement on the school's 2001 assessments of its Year 2 pupils, which showed that attainment was very low.

117. Attainment in Year 6 is similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection, but attainment in Year 2 is lower. However, where there are small numbers of pupils in each year group, as is the case at Marshland School, there can be considerable year-on-year fluctuations in attainment because of differences between year groups. This is a likely explanation for the apparent decline in attainment in Year 2.

118. Children start school with low levels of knowledge and understanding of the world. In all, one third are identified as having special educational needs and one tenth have severe learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties. Therefore, within this context, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. However, three factors in particular affect pupils' progress as they move through the school. One is their low level of skill in reading, the second is their difficulty in remembering what they have been taught, and the third is the way in which the curriculum for science is planned.

119. During the course of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 came to the end of a unit of work on 'light' and were assessed on the topic. During the course of the assessment, the teacher needed to help a number of pupils to read the questions. Later, an analysis of the answers also showed that a number of other pupils had either misread or misunderstood what they were to do. To prepare the pupils for the assessment, the teacher needed to go through what had been covered during the course of the topic, because otherwise a number of pupils would have had difficulty in remembering what they had been taught. These difficulties may help to explain the below average performance of pupils in test situations.

120. A scrutiny of samples of pupils' work which had been completed during the course of the previous term showed that on a number of occasions pupils in different year groups cover the same work at about the same level. For example, pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 had completed an almost identical 'sound trail' around the premises. This unnecessary repetition of work occurs because the school has not clearly mapped out the way in which pupils' skills are to be systematically developed as they move through the school.

121. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Three lessons were observed; one of these was good and the other two were satisfactory. Teachers plan their work carefully and are good at using what has previously been taught as a starting point for new learning. They know their pupils very well and are good at managing pupils' behaviour. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is seen in the satisfactory standards of behaviour in lessons and the way in which pupils were generally attentive and interested in their work. Good practice in sharing learning objectives with pupils helps them to concentrate on the task in hand. However, in plenary sessions, when learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson, opportunities are missed to refer back to the learning objectives and to challenge pupils to reflect on their own progress. Asking questions such as: *'What do you know now that you didn't know at the start of the lesson?'* would be a way of doing this. Particularly good practice in assessment was observed in a Year 6 lesson in which the teacher challenged pupils to 'brainstorm' what they already knew, or thought that they knew, about 'the earth and space', the next topic to be covered. Information gathered from this session was then analysed by the teacher to provide a starting point for her future lessons and would also be used as a measure of progress once the topic had been completed.

122. Weaknesses in teaching lie in the way in which pupils' work is marked and in the directive nature of some lessons. A close analysis of pupils' work showed that marking rarely contains any useful comments and is largely confined to ticks. There is no evidence at all of pupils improving their work as a result of previous marking. In some lessons all pupils do exactly the same written tasks, regardless of their prior attainment. Where this occurs, the work is likely to be too easy for the higher-attainers and too difficult for those of lower attainment. Outcomes usually are that higher-attaining pupils produce work of the same quality as pupils of average attainment and lower attaining pupils record little.

123. The curriculum is enhanced through visits to places of interest, such as Holt Hall and Duxford Airfield. Overall, the curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in literacy and numeracy, but there are not enough planned opportunities for the use of ICT in science.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

124. Overall, attainment in art and design and DT in Years 2 and 6 is below what is expected nationally because in previous years pupils have not developed their skills in all elements of the subjects in a systematic way. Some pupils in Year 6 are producing work of good quality within a narrow range of media, but in other areas of the subjects they have little experience. Progress is slow because of the weaknesses in the curriculum.

125. Standards in art are not as good as reported at the time of the previous inspection, and in DT they remain below average.

126. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one art and design lesson and two DT lessons were observed. Other evidence was gathered from examples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of teachers' planning.

127. In previous years, not enough time has been allocated for teaching art and design and DT. The school has recently increased the amount of teaching time by shortening the lunch break. Prior to taking this action, the time available for lessons in Years 3 to 6 was almost an hour below the nationally recommended minimum. Therefore, once the school had allocated time for teaching the core subjects in line with recommendations, not enough time remained to allow proper coverage of all of the Foundation subjects. In addition, there was no clear overview of the curriculum to show what was to be taught in different year groups and in different subjects. This made it difficult for the school to plan effective links between subjects and thus make better use of the limited time available.

128. Nationally recommended guidance has been adopted as the basis for the school's planning in art and design and DT, but it has yet to be fully adapted to meet the needs of pupils. The way in which pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed within the different elements of the subjects has yet to be mapped out, which means that there are gaps in pupils' experiences.

129. Good features of work in art and design are the use of sketchbooks, the appreciation of the work of famous artists, and the after-school art club. Sketchbooks, which appear to have been recently introduced, enable pupils to practise and refine their ideas. However, the work in them is generally of a lower standard than expected nationally. Yet some items are praiseworthy, such as the 'scaling grids' used by pupils in Years 4 and 5 to increase the size of compositions while retaining the correct proportions. Work produced by famous artists provides a useful stimulus for pupils as they attempt compositions in a similar style. For instance, pupils in Year 6 have been studying the work of Georgia O'Keefe and have made good attempts at recreating flowers in her style, in particular when using pastels. However, art appreciation is not planned in a systematic way and is generally left for teachers to incorporate into their lessons as needed. The after-school art club is popular with pupils and gives pupils good opportunities to work alongside friends from other classes. It is well organised and capably run by one of the school governors.

130. Further weaknesses in art and design lie in the narrowness of the curriculum planned. Pupils in Year 6, interviewed during the course of the inspection had little experience of using modelling media such as clay, and knew very little about techniques used for working with clay. They had been given no opportunities to work in digital media and few opportunities to work with textiles. For instance, they knew nothing about batik and tie-dye.

131. Basic techniques of designing, making and evaluating in DT are being well taught. For example, pupils in Year 2 have tested different ways of joining fabrics as part of their work in designing and making glove puppets. In Year 4, techniques for strengthening wooden joints

have been learned and designs for the construction of musical instruments have been drafted and then re-drafted as refinements have been incorporated. In Year 6, pupils have produced some good designs for slippers in response to the question: *'What do I want from a good pair of slippers?'* They have also constructed some well-finished hats on a Tudor theme. As in art and design, some of the work is of a good standard, but not enough pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at the level normally expected. The use of ICT, which is an integral part of the National Curriculum in DT, is not evident in any of the pupils' work.

132. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in art, but evidence from the good amount of DT work completed by pupils together with the lessons observed, indicates that DT is generally well taught. Strengths of teaching are the good management of pupils, the clarity of teacher's instructions and explanations, and the clear teaching of technique. However, as in many other subjects, pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have previously been taught, and this slows the pace of learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used a bench hook to carefully demonstrate how to cut lengths of dowel, before showing how they could be fastened to a cardboard box as axles for model vehicles. Unfortunately, most of the pupils had forgotten the previous week's lesson about the way in which boxes could be disassembled, turned inside out, and then reassembled. Therefore, so much time had to be spent on re-learning this skill that the pupils did not have time to apply their newly learned skills in measuring and cutting.

GEOGRAPHY

133. The school has maintained standards in geography since the last inspection. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, and in Years 2 and 6 they achieve levels of knowledge and understanding that match the standards expected for pupils of this age.

134. Pupils in Year 1 have a sound, developing knowledge of the school environment, the immediate locality and the natural world. For example, they make plans and maps of the school and their route to school, drawing on knowledge gained from walks around the school, the school grounds and the local area. They study food and gain knowledge of tropical fruits and other foods. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 discuss environmental issues in the local area and develop mapping skills satisfactorily as they study direct and indirect routes. They compare a seaside place, Branton, with Marshland St. James and study water and its effects on landscapes and people. The travels of 'Barnaby Bear', the school teddy bear, continue to engage pupils' interest, as they take turns to take him on holiday and send postcards of his 'experiences'. This practice increases pupils' awareness that the world extends beyond their own locality. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 study a less economically developed country, Peru, and compare and contrast life in Pampagrande, a village in the Andes in Peru, with life in Marshland St. James. While the school generally offers its pupils a good range of experiences in geography, the way in which their skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed in all areas of the subject have not been clearly mapped out in the past. This issue is being addressed, and so pupils in Year 6, currently also learning about Peru, and will go on to study significant places and environments.

135. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one geography lesson was observed. The teaching in this lesson was of good quality, and further evidence, from samples of pupils' previously completed work, shows that teaching is generally good and pupils learn well in lessons. In the single lesson observed, the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject was good and mapping skills were well taught. As a result, pupils made good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The teacher's expectations of what pupils could achieve were high, and pupils responded with interest, concentration and independence. Pupils were well managed, and their resulting good

behaviour helped create an atmosphere in which they could learn well. Teachers' planning and the quality and use of ongoing assessment are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. However, marking is brief and does not help pupils to know what they have achieved and how they can progress further.

136. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is above average, and these pupils make good progress because work is generally well matched to their potential and they are given good quality extra help. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development, for instance when pupils to discuss moral issues in relation to environmental factors.

137. The monitoring of pupils' performance in the subject is satisfactory. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are sound and assessment information is used satisfactorily to guide curriculum planning.

138. Leadership and management in the subject are both satisfactory, but the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. At present, ICT is not generally used to support learning in geography.

HISTORY

139. The school has maintained standards in history since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve levels of knowledge and understanding that match the standards expected for pupils of this age.

140. The recently appointed headteacher recognises the need to review the curriculum in history. Previously, the school has not clearly mapped out the way in which it intends to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding year by year and, as a result, there is some overlap of what is taught in different year groups. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 study famous people, invaders and settlers, and the Ancient Egyptians. The study of the Ancient Egyptians is then continued in Years 4 and 5, with the result that there is some repetition. In the past, not enough time was devoted to history. This has now been addressed. Now, greater emphasis is placed on promoting skills of historical enquiry and most pupils have a developing knowledge of chronology. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are beginning to reason and to judge periods by the standards of the time and not those of the present day. Unfortunately, in previous years, progress has been held back because of the lack of a structured programme for the development of skills and the tracking of pupils' progress. Pupils now make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Most pupils are interested in history and would benefit greatly from a more structured curriculum.

141. Only one history lesson was observed during the course of the inspection, and in this lesson the quality of teaching was good. The lesson, about medicine and health in Tudor times, was well planned. Learning intentions were made clear to pupils, and this helped them to learn because they knew what they had to get from the lesson. The teacher's good skills in managing and organising pupils resulted in a good climate for learning in which all pupils were able to concentrate on the tasks in hand. Good opportunities were taken to help pupils to develop skills in literacy, such as scanning text and taking notes, in order to obtain facts from a number of sources. Evidence from pupils' previously completed work shows that history lessons are generally used well to develop other skills, such as imaginative writing in newspaper reports for 'The Daily Prophet' of 4 November 1922.

142. Teachers' planning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teaching methods enable all pupils to achieve satisfactorily. Work is usually appropriately challenging

for all groups of pupils and leads to sound progress. However, marking of pupils' work is generally minimal and does not help pupils to know what they have achieved and how they can progress further. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment because of the extra help that they are given in class and because of the way in which teachers ensure that they play a full part in all activities.

143. The monitoring of pupils' subject performance is satisfactory and procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are sound. Subject leadership is satisfactory, and there is a clear understanding of the improvements that need to be made in this subject. At present, ICT is not used enough to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

144. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding and the development of their skills in ICT are below average. This represents a decline in standards at Year 2 since the last inspection. Standards remain the same at Year 6. The key issue from the previous inspection of raising attainment in ICT has therefore not been successfully addressed.

145. The current level of computer hardware and software is inadequate for the teaching and practising of basic skills. Pupils do not spend enough time on the computer to enable standards to improve. Few pupils have the opportunity to acquire information technology skills in their own homes and are therefore not able to improve their capability in their own time.

146. The main weaknesses in ICT are:

- not enough reliable computers;
- insufficient direct teaching of ICT skills;
- lack of breadth in the curriculum;
- lack of a clearly mapped out, step-by-step development of pupils' skills;
- lack of suitable hardware and software for teachers to practise their own skills following recent training;
- lack of a curriculum map giving an overview of what is to be taught in each year group, each term;
- lack of integration of ICT in other subjects, such as mathematics and science.

147. The main areas for improvement are:

- standards in information and communication technology;
- a clear programme for the systematic development of skills;
- an overview of what is to be taught in each year group, each term;
- full coverage of the legal requirements;
- increased time for whole class direct teaching each week;
- replacement of inadequate computers;
- updating of all programs used in classrooms, so that there is more cross-curricular use of ICT, particularly in mathematics and science;
- improved assessment and evidence of the use of ICT in other areas of the curriculum.

148. By Year 2, many pupils still require help in using the computer. Many of them are still operating at Level 1 of the National Curriculum programme of study. This is about a year below the expected level. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 learned that CD ROMs contain large amounts of information. Under the guidance of the teacher, they used the mouse to find their way around a CD ROM, identify areas on the home page and explored the

science program on the disk. They will require considerable practise before they are able to do this independently because their basic skills are underdeveloped.

149. In Year 6, the majority of pupils attain at Level 2 or 3. This is at least a level below that expected nationally and equates to standards most usually seen in Year 4. Pupils can save, retrieve and print work. They use text, tables, images and sound, and a few are able to use simulations and ICT models to investigate. Most pupils can use ICT to present work. About half the pupils are able to amend and redraft work and use a series of instructions to control devices. A third of pupils use sequences of instructions to control devices, use simulations and ICT models for decision-making, and describe their use of ICT and its uses outside school. (Level 3) They are able to exchange information by e-mail. Half of the pupils can present information in different forms with an awareness of audience. Pupils in Year 6 are learning to research a topic on the Internet and pupils in Years 4 and 5 are learning to use a scanner. Pupils do not possess the other skills that are expected for pupils of their age. They cannot frame questions when collecting, finding and interrogating information. Few pupils can interpret findings and recognise that poor quality information leads to unreliable results. Pupils cannot give a multimedia presentation, and they are unable to use simulations and ICT models to explore patterns and relationships or make predictions about decisions. (Level 4).

150. During the course of the inspection, three lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was good in two of the lessons and satisfactory in the other. Teachers have received recent training. Their knowledge and understanding is good and they teach the basic skills well, in difficult circumstances. Explanation, demonstration and practical activity are combined effectively and as a result pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding during demonstration lessons. However, they do not have enough opportunities to consolidate their skills. Teachers plan effectively; learning objectives are made clear to pupils, and teachers approach their work with enthusiasm. Opportunities are provided for pupils to assess what they have learned in lessons, thus enabling them to gain a sound knowledge of their own learning. Teachers have high expectations, and most pupils apply intellectual effort to their work. Teachers use methods that help all pupils to learn effectively within the lessons. Unfortunately, by the time they have the opportunity to practise their skills on the two computers available, pupils have generally forgotten what they have to do and need further instruction. The management of pupils is good and leads to good learning during the teacher's demonstration of techniques. On-going assessment in lessons enables teachers to recognise pupils' mistakes and misconceptions and to use them constructively to develop learning. Time and resources are used well and the pace of learning is good. Pupils enjoy their work. They are interested, enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills. Their behaviour and good relationships promote good learning.

151. It is difficult for pupils to become independent users of information technology in the circumstances that prevail. However, many opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum are missed.

152. The quality and range of learning opportunities is unsatisfactory. The appropriate statutory curriculum is not fully in place, and ICT is not fully integrated into curriculum planning in other subjects. Provision for pupils with special needs is barely satisfactory. Within the limitations of the school's provision, there is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

153. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory in that the need to improve standards is clearly understood and that the priorities for development outlined in the school improvement plan are quite appropriate. However the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

MUSIC

154. Standards in music are unsatisfactory and pupils make slow progress. No judgement about standards was made at the last inspection and so no comparison can be made. In Years 2 and 6, pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding are below the levels expected for pupils of this age. This occurs because the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school has not clearly mapped out the way in which pupils' skills are to systematically develop and there is no clear overview of what is to be taught each year, in each term. This makes the development of cross-curricular links difficult to achieve. In previous years, an inadequate amount of time has been devoted to music. The use of ICT is not systematically integrated into planning.

155. By Year 2, pupils have learned to select and explore percussion instruments, use sounds to create musical effects, and sustain a simple repeated rhythm. An awareness of pitch and pulse is developing, and a recognition of changes in dynamics. Pupils are taught to discriminate between high and low sounds and to create simple melodic patterns, and they make sounds of different duration on percussion instruments. They develop an understanding of dynamics and volume and an awareness of audience. However, pupils lack confidence in communicating their musical ideas to others because, in the past, they were not given enough opportunities to compose and perform. They listen to music from different times and places, for example music by Mozart in assembly.

156. By Year 6, pupils have had some experience of graphic scoring, grouping beats, tempo and musical patterns. They have a developing knowledge of orchestral instruments and music from different parts of the world. For instance, they study music from the Andes, thus making links with what they learn in geography. They identify how many instruments are played and learn that the pattern of notes is called a broken chord. They try to ascertain how many times the pattern is played before notes are changed, what the mood is, and which instruments play the melodies. They have some knowledge of the differences in dynamics, rhythm and structure, timbre, and response between different forms of music such as blues, calypso, heavy metal, traditional jazz and reggae. In the single music lesson observed, Year 6 pupils learned to create and develop a popular style of music. They put creative effort into their work, but they lacked the skills that they should have developed by their age. There is virtually no use of ICT in music.

157. Since only one lesson was observed, no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching because no supplementary evidence was available to support a judgement, such as samples of pupils' previously completed work. In the single lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory. Planning was sound and the teaching methods enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve satisfactorily. Most pupils showed interest, concentration and independence. There was equality of access and opportunity for all pupils.

158. Good features of the curriculum are the enrichment activities such as visits from musicians and the school ocarina club. This flourishing club meets weekly and is attended by nearly twenty pupils. Club practices focus on performance, and pupils have entertained

members of the local chapel. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through giving them opportunities to play together and to listen to a range of different music, including music from other countries. Resources are adequate, but they are not fully used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. Standards in PE are average in Year 6 and about the same as reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress. No lessons were observed in Year 2, so no judgements can be made for this year group.

160. A particularly good feature of the school's provision for pupils' physical development is the organisation of swimming. Documentary evidence indicates that standards in swimming are likely to be above average. Almost all pupils in Year 6 achieve the nationally expected standard and then go on to exceed it through a carefully devised programme of water skills and personal survival work. This is important, given the fenland location of the school, and is a very good example of the good emphasis that the school places on ensuring pupils' safety and welfare.

161. A further good feature is the use of expertise from outside the school to help develop pupils' skills in specific areas of the subject. A visiting gymnastics instructor from a leisure centre in Kings Lynn was observed taking a lesson in Year 6; this was the last of a series of five arranged by the school. As with other activities observed, good emphasis was placed on issues of health and safety. All pupils had changed into PE kit and no pupils wore jewellery. Pupils listened well, concentrated hard, and showed good levels of control when devising a sequence of movements. They worked well together and made useful suggestions when evaluating each other's performance. All pupils used the correct terminology when describing movements that they had learned, such as *'front support'* and *'arabesque'*, and all used the 'present' movement to indicate the beginning and end of their sequences. During the lesson, the class teacher and LSA made good use of their time by recording their assessments of pupils' skills.

162. In the only other lesson observed, pupils in Years 4 and 5 constructed dance sequences on a theme of 'Carnival in Brazil'. They needed to concentrate hard to co-ordinate their movements to the changing rhythms of the music being played, and many needed to copy the good demonstration given by the teacher to keep in time. This lesson was well organised and a good pace to learning was sustained, even though the school stereo system proved to be unreliable during parts of the activity.

163. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils showed that they understood the reason for a proper 'warm-up' before PE lessons and knew something about the effects of exercise on their bodies. However, in both of the lessons observed, no time was allowed for a 'cooling-down' period at the end of the sessions.

164. There is good direction given to the school's work in PE. Although the hall is rather cramped for vigorous activities involving the older pupils, it is nonetheless a useful facility for a school of this size. The PE apparatus is in good condition and is regularly maintained. The school's stock of gymnastics mats is only barely adequate for whole class lessons and are of variable quality.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. The school has maintained standards in religious education reported at the time of the previous inspection. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding match the standards expected for pupils of this age by the locally Agreed Syllabus.

166. Religious education is an integral part of the life of the school. It reflects the school's all-inclusive policy and its aims and values. Pupils are aware that the religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian. Pupils in Year 1 learn about 'belonging', about the friends of Jesus, about what makes a good friend, and the concept of forgiveness. In Years 2 and 3, pupils show a developing knowledge of the importance of Christmas and Easter in the lives of Christians, and of the Old Testament and Judaism. They make satisfactory links with other religions through festivals such as Divali, thus increasing their knowledge and understanding of religious diversity. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 develop a sound understanding of Judaism and the Ten Commandments, and explore the central teachings of Buddhism, in addition to those of Christianity. Year 6 pupils study the Christian Year, the Bible, the local church and faith. Older pupils are encouraged to carry out research in relation to special books, special places, special times, special people and new life. Work takes good account of different levels of literacy and degree of maturity, with the result that all pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

167. Of the three lessons observed during the course of the inspection, teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the two others. However, evidence from an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' previously completed work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is generally good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teachers ensure that pupils gain an insight into the beliefs and values of others. Pupils are encouraged to share their own religious experiences and to give explanations of related elements in their own experience. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and pupils demonstrate interest and involvement in activities. The management of pupils is good, and pupils' satisfactory behaviour and good relationships promote learning. Teachers engage pupils' interest, with the result that pupils apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of their own learning. Time and resources are used well, and pupils' productivity and pace of working is good. Literacy skills are satisfactorily developed through speaking and listening, research and writing. However, marking is minimal and does not help pupils to know what they have achieved and how they can make further progress.

168. The curriculum is satisfactory and makes good use of the local church and chapel as resources for learning in the community. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the work planned and are fully included in all activities. Pupils are given good opportunities to consider moral issues and to gain an insight into the beliefs and values of Christianity and other faiths. Resources are adequate and are used well but, at present, ICT is not generally used to help pupils learn in this subject.